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ABSTRACT

A diverse group of individuals was asked to prepare brief commentaries on the condition of higher education, its contribution to the economic and social development of southern U.S., and its need for reform. The 12 resultant essays, each printed seperately, and gathered together in this collection: "Higher Education: A Prized Asset in Need of Change" (Gerald L. Baliles); "Higher Education: Passport to the American Dream" (Bob Edwards); "Higher Education and the New Economy" (Johnnetta B. Cole); "Customer-Driven Accountability in Higher Education" (James R. Mingle); "Higher Education: The Future in Miniature" (John T. Hartley); "The Practical Value of Higher Education" (Sally Clausen); "Promise and Challenge: The New Demographics of Higher Education" (William H. Gray III); "Charting Higher Education's New Realities" (George W. Johnson); "The Community College's Open Door" (Mary D. Thornley); "Listening to Higher Education's Different Voices" (Pat Gray); "Successful Universities Reach Out to Students" (Bill Hobby); and "Restoring Higher Education's Leadership Role" (Dorothy S. Ridings). (JDD)

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Southern Regional Education Board



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For nearly a decade, the SREB Commission for Educational Quality has focused attention on critical educational issues in the region. Most recently, the Commission has been examining important questions about higher education's value and its need for change. To help it find answers, the Commission asked a diverse group of individuals to prepare brief commentaries on the condition of higher education, its contribution to the economic and social development of our states, and its need for reform. Their comments have been valuable to the Commission, and we believe they deserve a wider audience.

We have prepared a representative group of these brief essays in a series called *Voices of America for Higher Education.* We will be sending them periodically to a select audience of persons who help shape public opinion. Three or four essays will be sent at a time for easier reading. This folder can be used to keep the essays for handy reference.

Editorial page and magazine editors might consider these commentaries for their opinion sections. Governors, legislators, and business leaders may find useful insights as they prepare speeches or reflect on education policy issues.

You will soon see the ideas found in *Voices of America for Higher Education* reflected in the written and video reports about the future of higher education by the SREB Commission for Educational Quality. Late in 1994, many public television stations will air a documentary based on the Commission's work.

The Southern Regional Education Board was created by Southern governors and legislators after World War II to improve and promote higher education. In a different South and on a vastly altered world stage, SREB remains focused on higher education's vital role in economic and social development.

**Mark D. Musick**
*President*
*Southern Regional Education Board*

Higher education is America's number one resource. In the face of a national and world economy full of uncertainties, a nation of free men and women can have no greater asset than an excellent higher education system. One certainty is that nations with superior colleges and universities will prosper economically and socially in the new global marketplace.

What is less certain are the specific actions we must take to assure the continuing quality of our great resource. How can we take advantage of the public's abiding faith in American colleges and universities, harness the energy behind demands for a more productive, accountable higher education system, and continue to improve our quality of life and our economic competitiveness through our higher education investment?

Leaders in government and business recognize the urgency of our situation. Investments in education, health care, infrastructure, and research are all linked to work—whether our people can work and at what standard, and whether America will work as an internationally competitive economy. We have to forge an understanding that a strong higher education system will be critical in preparing America for work in the next century.

It is a question of information, understanding, and dialogue—but most of all, it is a question of leadership. Leaders must place the facts before the American people as clearly and concisely as possible, encourage discussion, and help build a new consensus about the future of this nation and higher education.

**Gerald L. Baliles**
*Chairman*
*SREB Commission for Educational Quality*

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Number 1 in a Series

# Higher Education: A Prized Asset in Need of Change

Gerald L. Baliles

# Higher Education: A Prized Asset in Need of Change

Gerald L. Baliles

*Gerald L. Baliles served as Governor of Virginia from 1986 to 1990. He is chairman of the Public Broadcasting Service and the SREB Commission for Educational Quality. This essay is presented by the Southern Regional Education Board as part of its series, "Voices of America for Higher Education."*

We face complex, and in some ways, unprecedented challenges in America today. A highly competitive and relentlessly changing international economy tests our people and our enterprise. The era of sheltered industries and self-sustaining domestic markets for America has ended. The new global economy respects no national boundaries, respects no preordained market shares, respects no prior claim to profits.

Economically, we are challenged on all fronts—domestically and internationally. Technologically, we are challenged in the realm of new ideas and machines. Educationally, we are challenged to instruct, train, and prepare our graduates for a future of different assumptions, different relationships, and different conditions.

As we strive to meet the challenges of a global marketplace, we must be able to count upon one of America's most prized assets—our higher education system.

The quality of America's colleges and universities is recognized by the American public and by the millions of students who have come from around the world to attend them. Public opinion polls in America show an overwhelming belief in the critical importance of a college education. Yet state support for colleges and universities is falling, and public dissatisfaction with some aspects of higher education is rising.

Higher education's hard times grow out of the ongoing budgetary problems of our states. Declining revenues and the escalating costs of health and human service programs have created a financial vise that squeezes hard on programs with less "entitlement." Some higher education institutions in our states have cut their budgets by 15 percent or more in the last few years. As institutions rely more and more on spiraling tuition charges for their support, the historical partnership between state governments and universities—which has meant so much to our states' development—is threatened.

Many higher education leaders believe they have been asked to bear too much of the burden of budget shortfalls. At the same time, legislators and other government leaders who face tough financial decisions question whether higher education is spending wisely the dollars now available. They have begun to ask important questions about higher education's accountability, productivity, and future roles and missions.

Until we develop a broader public consensus about why our colleges and universities are important—why they are of value and how they must

Public opinion polls in America show an overwhelming belief in the critical importance of a college education.

change to be of greater service—we are not going to connect education, work, and economic competition.

In 1992, I accepted the chairmanship of the Southern Regional Education Board's Commission for Educational Quality. The Commission's history of service to the region is significant. In the late 1980s, under the leadership of now Secretary of Education Richard Riley, the Commission developed 12 ambitious educational goals for the South for the year 2000. The current Commission has accepted a different challenge—making the case for higher education in difficult times.

Two words describe the focus of our work: value and change. We are asking ourselves these questions: How can we take advantage of the public's abiding faith in our colleges and universities to preserve their quality and value? How can we harness the energy behind demands for a more productive, accountable higher education system? And what steps must we take to continue to improve our economic competitiveness through our higher education investment?

Over the next year, we will use the printed word, public forums, and television to place the facts about higher education before the American people as clearly and concisely as possible. Our aim is to encourage broad discussion and to work toward a new consensus about higher education's vital place in America's future.

I do not see enough evidence that this nation, really deep down, sees and appreciates the connection between education and economic prosperity. Somehow, that connection must be understood and communicated throughout this country. It will require leadership at the top levels of government and business—leadership that is constant, determined and sustained over time.

As a nation, we continually challenge ourselves to get ahead. Yet, too often we have taken for granted the very institutions upon which our hopes must be anchored. Because our educational institutions have provided for us in the past, there is a tendency—call it wishful thinking or complacency—to assume that they will continue to do so in the future. Nothing could be more dangerous or more inviting of failure. There is a saying that in the long run the race belongs not merely to the swift, but to the far-seeing, to those who anticipate change.

The value of education must still be our surest conviction. The improvement of education must be our personal commitment, but it is not ours to accomplish alone. We must find ways to get the word out;

How can we harness the energy behind demands for a more productive, accountable higher education system?

to market the message: to promote the dream.

If we are to solve our economic growth problems in this country, we must make the connection in the public mind between cause and effect, investment and return. It all comes down to this: Our economic future depends upon our ability to compete, but our ability to compete depends upon our ability to educate.

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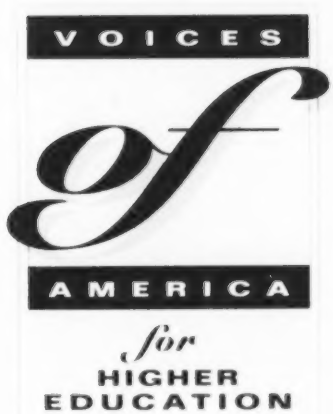
VOICES of AMERICA for HIGHER EDUCATION

Number 2 in a Series

# Higher Education: Passport to the American Dream

Bob Edwards



# Higher Education: Passport to the American Dream

Bob Edwards

*Bob Edwards hosts National Public Radio's award-winning news program "Morning Edition." This essay is presented by the Southern Regional Education Board as part of its series, "Voices of America for Higher Education."*

Higher education is one of the things America does right. That's why young people from all over the world are fighting to get into our colleges. As places of instruction, as repositories for our collective knowledge, and as research facilities—our universities are the envy of the world. When the Nobel prizes are awarded each year, most of the winners are scholars educated at American colleges or scholars now doing research in America. We should be proud of what we've accomplished in higher education.

Changes in American society are making a college education more important than ever before. We are becoming more narrowly focused, more specialized. We choose information more closely attuned to our jobs and our lifestyles—forsaking the newspapers and mass audience broadcast news programs that once informed great numbers of us at the same time about a broad range of subjects. As more and more people know less and less about the world around them, the well-rounded, educated college graduate will be more valued.

Despite the higher education success story, our colleges have become major targets of state budget cuts. Budget cuts have affected everything from professors' pay, to library hours, to the quantity of course offerings. Students have found they must remain in college beyond the normal four years to take all the courses they're required to have for graduation. This not only means their talents are not available in the workplace; it also puts added strain on the financial resources of their families.

We cannot allow the quality of higher education to be diluted, and we must make certain that the rich mix of college options be maintained. Public, private and religious schools of all sizes and orientation retain their value. A liberal arts education should continue to be at the core of what colleges do. Professional, specialized degree programs should be offered to meet the needs of the private sector, whose resources will be necessary if colleges are to remain open for business. Community colleges must continue to be funded and expanded as they continue to meet the needs of students who might not otherwise be able to pursue their education beyond high school.

Not all the learning at the university is drawn from the professor-student classroom model. The campus should foster an atmosphere in which the student learns responsibility and good citizenship. In recent years, colleges have failed to help students with this part of their development.

A college campus should be an exciting place filled with variety and exposure to new ideas, with everything on the menu.

A college campus should provide a wide range of possibilities. It should be an exciting place filled with variety and exposure to new ideas, with everything on the menu. The student who chooses to associate only with those of his or her own race, creed, color, sex, or national origin is squandering an enormous opportunity.

The student who shuns the education available from peers of other cultures might as well have remained at his or her high school lunch table with the neighborhood children. Yet college administrators are caving in to demands for race-based dormitories and activity centers for particular clans. Campus newspapers are censored. Unpopular opinion is discouraged in the classroom. Segregation is just as wrong today as it was in the Jim Crow age. Fashionable political thought is no less repugnant today than it was in the McCarthy era.

If campuses encourage tribalism and discourage free speech, then the very purpose of our nation is obsolete and the Constitution is a quaint piece of nostalgia. What lessons are we teaching our young people if we tell them their identity should be defined in a certain way? The purpose of a university is to expose young people to the whole spectrum of human experience, not to keep them locked in the ghetto of the familiar and comfortable. The college graduate should be ready to take his or her place in the world.

The task of higher education becomes more difficult each year because of the continuing decline of education at the primary and secondary levels. Long ago, colleges could count on receiving students with a background in Greek and Latin. Today, native-born Americans go off to college without a command of English. School systems—now required to provide sex education, AIDS education, drug education and driver education—must strain to provide academic education.

History, government, geography, civics, and other subjects mastered by previous generations now are crammed into something called social studies, which is not given much priority. As a result, young people cannot find the major cities on a map and have no sense of the values that made us who we are. Colleges take in young people unprepared for college work and then are told to do something about the dropout rate and the flunkout rate. The solution to these problems may be to fix what's wrong with primary and secondary schools.

Though America's colleges face a number of challenges today, it's my

The purpose of a university is to expose young people to the whole spectrum of human experience, not to keep them locked in the ghetto of the familiar and comfortable.

feeling they will prevail. What makes this country great is that mobility across lines of class and race is still possible—and it's possible only because of education. A good college education is the great equalizer. It's a passport to a life denied to some of our ancestors who, for whatever reasons, were unable to go to college. So a college education will retain its importance in American society.

But we need to see higher education in another context as well. Can our colleges help us advance in an increasingly global society? Will Europe and Japan pass us by? Can we remain competitive and retain our status of living? Will we see education only in terms of what it provides for us economically? Do we still believe in the inherent value of knowing more than we did yesterday? I think we do. I also think we wait for crises to occur before we respond to situations. At this point, no one perceives a crisis. Higher education is seen as something we do right.

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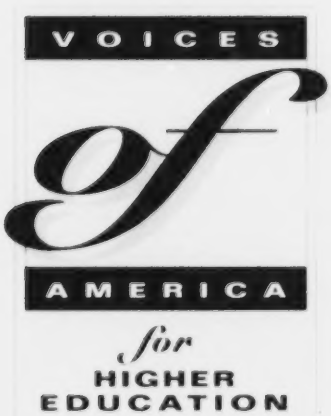
VOICES *of* AMERICA *for* HIGHER EDUCATION

Number 3 in a Series

# Higher Education and the New Economy

Johnnetta B. Cole



# Higher Education and the New Economy

Johnnetta B. Cole

*Johnnetta B. Cole is President of Spelman College in Atlanta, Georgia. This essay is presented by the Southern Regional Education Board as part of its series, "Voices of America for Higher Education."*

It is no surprise that questions are being raised in state legislatures about the value of higher education. It is also no surprise that those who are raising these questions may not be the same individuals who have a commitment to higher education's loftier, less tangible, goals. Often, they are individuals whose constituencies have elected them to balance state budgets, cut burgeoning costs, and generally maintain careful stewardship over dwindling resources.

In such a climate it has become necessary for higher education to defend its need for a greater slice of the financial pie. Given this very strained economic climate, it is clear that higher education must find ways to articulate its value in terms of overall economic benefit to our states and our nation. It is important that we begin to talk about the source of connection between a good post-secondary education and the ability to increase not only one's individual standard of living, but to insure quality of life for all people.

Kindergarten through 12th grade is a time for building the framework for the lifelong challenge of making sense of our ever-changing world. It is a time of information gathering and reference making, of building schema and constructing knowledge. Higher education, on the other hand, is about synthesis, about broadening our knowledge and gaining depth of understanding. It is a time when we begin to focus on building a life and making a living.

Understanding how to do this is becoming increasingly more difficult as the global environment changes. Moving from an economy based on industrialization to an information economy is placing significant stress on all of our major systems. The complexities which touch all other facets of life are, indeed, barking at the door of higher education.

Higher education is probably the most valuable instrument that we have in our attempt to retool the economy for the demands of a new, more globally and technologically oriented society. Higher education, particularly that based in the liberal arts, provides individuals with skills that are remarkably effective during a transformational period.

Our current national and global crises are more likely to be resolved when we draw upon the strengths of those who have innovative ways to solve problems, who know how to be flexible, who are able to tolerate ambiguity and complexity, and who have the capacity to extend the ability to think, reason, and analyze beyond current boundaries. It is in higher education institutions that we

Higher education is probably the most valuable instrument we have in our attempt to retool the economy for the demands of a new, more globally and technologically oriented society.

are challenged to develop and refine these abilities in order to critically assess our circumstances.

In forums all over our country, higher education executives are discussing the adjustments they and their institutions are making in the changing global environment. They are looking at ways they can form business and education partnerships to insure that graduates are prepared with the kinds of skills that business will need for the future. They are finding ways to share research and broaden the dissemination of information.

Higher education institutions are also discovering the need to address productivity issues. There is currently an enormous focus on institutional effectiveness, quality, performance, and assessment. Higher education executives are wrestling with questions about how to increase the productivity of their institutions, as determined by undergraduate student performance, while improving the quality of education and measuring the effectiveness of its delivery. Certainly, this is no small task. But it is being tackled with a vengeance, from accountability workshops to Total Quality Management.

All of this is good, but more needs to be done. In order for higher education to contribute most productively to the economic health of our nation and the world, it must find ways to promote more fully scholarship that encompasses the contributions of the world's diverse population.

On a small scale, higher education is making inroads to providing students with the opportunity to obtain an expanded view of the world. Many institutions now have programs in women's studies and studies of various people of color. Unfortunately, what is missing in higher education is the integrating of information about other peoples and other cultures into the mainstream curriculum. It will be a glorious day when the various "special studies" programs will no longer be needed because a focus on all of the world's people will be "business as usual."

Likewise, colleges and universities, while supporting intellectual activity, can nurture an appreciation for, and an understanding of, every individual's responsibility to help create a better society. There is a movement in many institutions to make community service a companion to a student's academic program. At Spelman College, for example, over 40 percent of our students are engaged in community activities. For the sake of our country and the world, we simply cannot afford to educate people who have no sense of the millions of Americans and others in the world who are home-

The world is counting on higher education to provide the frame of reference in which answers to its most challenging questions may be probed.

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less, who are oppressed for whatever reason, or who live in danger of having their peace shattered by war.

For all of these reasons, higher education must become a priority item in state budgets. It is basic to our continued growth and transition into a new economy, and it is the training ground for building individual responsibility to understand the world and to help make it a better place. The most profound social problems of our day are being addressed in institutions of higher learning. This must be continued and wholeheartedly supported. It is important that life's challenges be consciously viewed within the context of intellectual activity.

The world is counting on higher education to provide the frame of reference in which answers to its most challenging questions may be probed. The "product" of our higher education institutions—scholarship—is the major source of knowledge and information upon which we depend for the refinement of old systems and the development of new ones. It is the rock upon which our economic future will be built.

Access, synthesis, and the application of technology and information are fast becoming determinants of economic success. Without the results of academic research, businesses in this technology and information age would be crippled.

Higher education has the responsibility for preparing us to meet the challenges of the present and capture the promises of the future. It is higher education that will nurture the seeds that will result in the blooming of a stronger, yet more compassionate, America and ultimately a world filled with a lot more peace with justice.

VOICES *of* AMERICA *for* HIGHER EDUCATION

Number 4 in a Series

# Customer-Driven Accountability in Higher Education

James R. Mingle

# Customer-Driven Accountability in Higher Education

James R. Mingle

*James R. Mingle is executive director of the State Higher Education Executive Officers, a Denver-based organization of state higher education commissioners and chancellors of state university systems. This essay is presented by the Southern Regional Education Board as part of its series, "Voices of America for Higher Education."*

A consensus has emerged among state and national leaders over education policy: America's standard of living and its leadership role in the world cannot be sustained without significant gains in educational achievement by larger proportions of the population, both youth and adults.

The best evidence of this consensus is found in the commitment of the nation's governors to the education goals established in 1989—and the persuasive arguments in such reports as *America's Choice: High Skills or Low Wages!* But these views have by no means been accepted by the broader public, or in many cases by the education community, or even by some of the governors who signed on to the national goals but so far have given them only lip service.

I see a growing separation between the rhetoric of higher achievement and broader participation and the reality of public support for higher education institutions. Declines in financial support are understandable, given the current conditions of state government. But the questioning of the underlying value of higher education by political leaders and some elements of the general public is more troublesome.

Higher education faces three important and interrelated challenges in the decade ahead. First, we must build public support for the overall goal of a more effective educational system focused on higher standards for teaching, learning, and research excellence. Second, we must improve the responsiveness of institutions to changing societal needs, especially the need for improving the skills, knowledge, and civility of students. And third, we must find more productive and cost-effective ways of delivering educational services.

Businesses, schools, even governmental agencies, are rethinking how they are organized and how they might change to respond to the external environment and improve their productivity. David Osborne and Ted Gaebler, in their book *Reinventing Government*, provide examples of how "results-oriented, customer-driven" governmental agencies can meet the needs of citizens and restore faith in these institutions.

The governance and accountability structures built around the higher education enterprise also are being questioned. Governors and legislators wonder why they cannot get institutions to be more responsive to their concerns. In their effort to get the system to bend to their will, governmental leaders require more and more information about costs and performance, and develop more and more detailed rules about the

*Much* accountability focuses on who shall lead the system, when the important question is how to lead.

operation of the system. This exchange often leaves both parties frustrated.

When frustration reaches the breaking point, legislators or governors propose that the governing or coordinating board be abolished or reorganized, with new (and they hope) more responsive appointees and new legislative mandates. Much of this type of accountability focuses on the question of who shall lead the system, when in fact the important question is how to lead.

Higher education prides itself as the model of decentralized management, the model that American business is now adopting. But the management model pioneered by Edward Deming, and so successfully adopted by the Japanese, takes a team approach to improving processes at the bottom of the organization while a few strategic decision makers set overall direction at the top. Typically in a higher education institution, the producers of instruction, research, and service operate in relative isolation from one another. They are not, with the exception of some research and service activities, part of an effective team.

Meanwhile, at the top, the leaders of the institutions—presidents, provosts, deans—are required to gain support and buy-in from a very long list of "stakeholders" within and outside the institution: faculty, students, and groups representing various interests, such as alumni concerned about the athletic program. The result of this isolation at the bottom and participatory management at the top can be gridlock, with high administrative costs, and an undermining of leadership.

The accountability devices used today—including rules, mandates, reporting requirements and funding systems—seldom promote quality, at least not a definition of quality that focuses on adding value and meeting "customer expectation." Information and data about the higher education system pass back and forth between administrators and legislators. Producers (faculty) and customers (students and employers) are left out of the loop. In fact, many faculty see the value of administration primarily as protection from this outside intrusion. Meanwhile, legislators and governors keep beating on the system for change.

This is not a system designed to promote change. Instead of a debate about accountability between administrators and public officials, we must directly engage students, faculty, and the employers of our graduates. This can be done in a variety of ways.

■ Students need better information about the skills needed to succeed and which institutions can do the

We should consider ways to make one part of the university accountable as a customer to other parts.

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best job in helping them gain those skills. In some cases we may need to give students more choice to purchase the services and programs they most highly value.

■ Employers should be stronger partners in the design of our curricula and the evaluation of our success. Another customer is the community at large. Does that community believe that our graduates are contributing to the collective good?

■ Faculty need incentives to define their priorities in "customer" terms, rather than solely on their own terms. In many institutions, the academic management system depends on "voluntary" cooperation from the tenured faculty. Changes in pay and promotion systems can reset the balance between professional autonomy and organizational objectives.

■ In short, we must put producers and customers in direct contact with each other and get politicians, administrators, and planners focused on broad public policy issues and strategic direction.

Within administrative structures we should consider ways to make one part of the organization accountable as a customer to other parts. Richard Heydinger of the Alliance for Higher Education Strategies suggests an "unbundled" approach: Separate public corporations might be established for different functions of universities, such as facilities ownership and management; libraries and computing; and counseling, advising and performance assessment. Each corporation would be responsible for contracting with colleges and universities to meet their needs and the conditions of their charter. The system would promote market mechanisms but would leave important policy decisions in the hands of state boards and legislators.

Peter Drucker has noted that the purpose of all organizations lies outside the organization. This is a powerful idea around which to rethink accountability in ways that can transform colleges and universities. Balancing professional autonomy with customer accountability will be a challenge. But the result will be the public support we need to reach a higher standard of excellence for the 21st Century.

VOICES of AMERICA for HIGHER EDUCATION

Number 5 in a Series

# Higher Education: The Future in Miniature

John T. Hartley

# Higher Education: The Future in Miniature

John T. Hartley

*John T. Hartley is chairman of the Harris Corporation, a diversified company and the largest employer in Florida. Mr. Hartley co-chairs the Task Force on Higher Education in the 21st Century. This essay is presented by the Southern Regional Education Board as part of its series, "Voices of America for Higher Education."*

John Adams, the second president of the United States, held education to be indispensable to the liberty of our nation. Abraham Lincoln said it was the most important enterprise in which we as a people may be engaged. An old Chinese proverb calls the educational system of a country its future in miniature.

We in Florida business and industry know well that all of them had it exactly right. Our companies could not function without well-educated people. Our communities, our state, and our nation could not have prospered as they have without the contributions educated people make to the economic and social advancement of our society. College degrees have always been valued highly as evidence of a well-educated person.

Now, however, there are unmistakable signs of crisis in higher education. America's colleges and universities are, perhaps, in their worst financial shape in half a century. According to *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, in 1991, total state appropriations for public higher education fell below the level of the previous year for the first time in 30 years. And student financial aid and private giving threaten to move in reverse—the victims of federal budget deficits, changes in tax laws, and donor concerns about the economy.

In the midst of these financial problems, America's colleges and universities are also undergoing a crisis of public confidence. Critics say that a college education is one of the few things Americans have been willing to pay for and not get. In the mid-1960s, 61 percent of Americans responding to a Lou Harris opinion poll said they had a great deal of confidence in the people running higher education. By 1990, the confidence level was down to 35 percent; in 1992, it was only 25 percent.

By virtually any standard—economic, political, social, or scientific—these dual crises bring our nation to a critical crossroads. The decisions we make in the next few years will determine what kind of a nation we will be in the next century.

Those of us in high technology industries know that the skills and capabilities of our people are the primary differentiators in our ability to compete globally. At Harris, we are engaged in knowledge work, and knowledge work requires knowledgeable people.

This need for knowledgeable people applies increasingly to all kinds of business activity. Traditional physical or "hands-on" work is making more and more use of complex equipment and systems that require far more than manual skills to

opetate and maintain. Two traditional Florida industries, agriculture and tourism, continually add high tech equipment to remain competitive. And two industries of great importance in driving Florida's economic future—aerospace and biotechnology—are knowledge work at its highest levels. Companies in high tech fields will not be attracted to Florida unless they, their employees, and their families have ready access to quality educational institutions. So the dual crisis in higher education affects Floridians directly.

Neither this country nor this state can afford an open checkbook for higher education. There are too many competing claims today. Colleges and universities have to find ways to do more with the same, or even less. They must increase their productivity in the same manner that we in industry are being challenged to do.

Most of us in business are familiar with the concepts of Total Quality Management—TQM—which are helping to revitalize American industry. I believe they have equally important application to American higher education. TQM is not a program; it is a process of continuous change and improvement—often revolutionary change and improvement—and is focused on better serving the customer.

At Harris, our name for TQM is *Quality First*. We have a vision of being a company of the highest quality in everything we do. Our goal is nothing less than world-class performance. *Quality First* is our strategy for achieving that goal, focusing all Harris people on customer satisfaction as the paramount purpose. Continuous improvements are as important to higher education as they are to industry in the United States.

In higher education, the primary customer—the undergraduate—all too often is given a back seat. Too many undergraduate students, particularly in lower division courses, are taught by graduate students, rather than by experienced faculty. Furthermore, a significant portion of the increased funding for education over the past three decades has been directed not to the classroom, but to other areas. A 1990 study sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education indicates that the number of students in four-year colleges increased by seven percent from 1975 to 1985, and the number of full-time faculty members increased by six percent. However, the number of administrators increased by 18 percent, and the number of non-academic professionals—accountants, lawyers, information specialists, and public affairs officers—grew by 61 percent.

The fact is that three-quarters of adult Americans do not hold a bachelor's degree, yet they support much of higher education with their taxes. If they ever become convinced that the institutions they support have emphasized non-academic activities at the expense of their basic obligations to undergraduates, the response is likely to be a very strong public outcry—and even less funding.

Critics charge that too many scholars, once the drive for tenure has been satisfied, ignore productivity, abandon significant research, and content themselves with trivial teaching loads. As for the really good teachers, each year many leave academe for better-paying jobs in business and industry. These trends heighten the need to get administrative costs down and use these resources to retain those capable of delivering a high-quality product directly to their customers in the classrooms.

Colleges and universities need to rethink who they are and what they stand for, particularly in the current environment of increased

*We* in the business world need to ask ourselves how we can help colleges understand the new realities and reshape themselves.

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ethnic and gender diversity. Some hard questions need to be asked:

- What values sustain this institution?
- Can we continue to try to be all things to all people? With fewer resources, how can we do more with less?
- Is tenure essential to academic freedom, or can academic freedom be maintained without it?
- Is excellence what we always thought it was, or do our customers and other stakeholders have a different definition of excellence?

We in the business world need to ask ourselves how we can help our institutions reshape themselves. A lot of TQM experience has been developed in our businesses. We need more partnerships with colleges and universities to share this experience. And we need to work with them to achieve continuous improvement in the educational product on which all of society depends.

Harris has been closely involved with educational institutions for many years. One of the things we have learned from these partnerships is that a traditional college education is not for everyone. Many students who struggle through a four-year curriculum, and many who drop out altogether, might be better served by alternative post-high school instruction. At the same time, those who *are* well qualified to benefit too often find college a dull and discouraging experience because of the leveling effect of curricula and instruction. We have to help our colleges direct scarce resources to where they are needed to achieve world-class higher education. And we need to provide better alternatives for those who do not benefit from a four-year college education—alternatives that include contemporary training institutes focusing on the skills required in today's world.

We all have a crucial stake in the success of higher education in the rapidly changing environment of today's world. We must help our colleges and universities understand the new realities and assist them in meeting the challenges they face through a process of continuous improvement.

VOICES *of* AMERICA *for* HIGHER EDUCATION

Number 6 in a Series

# The Practical Value of Higher Education

Sally Clausen

# The Practical Value of Higher Education

Sally Clausen

*Sally Clausen is Education Advisor to the Governor of Louisiana and has previously served as the Commissioner of Higher Education on the Louisiana Board of Regents. This essay is presented by the Southern Regional Education Board as part of its series, "Voices of America for Higher Education."*

The future of our country depends upon each state fostering an atmosphere that includes a tax structure that can grow with the economy; a healthy environment; and a higher education system that can provide leadership, teaching resources, a well-trained workforce, and research and technology to help guide it into the 21st century.

It is the third element, the need for a strong higher education system, that many who do not have an immediate stake in a college or university may not comprehend.

As the economy in the United States, Louisiana, and many other states has declined, citizen-taxpayers have felt the pinch. They demand that their public officials be more accountable and responsible for their tax dollars. They demand that priorities be set.

For many taxpayers, higher education is not a priority. It is not within their experience, and they see no immediate and practical reason to put the needs of higher education over other needs. Therefore, if taxpayers do not demand that higher education be a priority, then elected officials will not give it priority.

As a result, what used to be the envy of nations—an excellent and accessible American higher education system—is losing the prestigious, favored position it once maintained in American life.

Higher education is no longer exempt from public scrutiny or from the "credibility gap" that exists between an increasingly skeptical society and any office or agency that is supported by tight public dollars.

As financial aid has decreased and tuition and fees increased, enrollment has been capped, and accessibility to higher education has become more restrictive. The pool of supporters of higher education has been reduced, and those who remain are affected by a sagging morale. Thus, higher education is suffering from an "image" problem. More important, it is losing the vital public financial support that enables it to take its place in the overall economic development picture.

It was Benjamin Franklin who said, "The only thing more expensive than education is ignorance."

Higher education and its supporters must make this compelling argument to Mr. and Ms. Taxpayer who have never attended college and who have no college-graduate or college-bound children. He and she must be shown that they have a vested interest in higher education, because a decrease in funds for higher education translates as a decrease in the quality of life for our society.

It must be demonstrated clearly that, while education is its primary mission, a college or university also is an active participant in its community. It is a job creator and a wage-payer; it trains and provides its community with teachers, doctors, and engineers; it provides creative minds that can help solve community problems; and it maintains research laboratories providing vital information that can improve the quality of one's life with labor- and life-saving inventions.

Further, it is well documented that college graduates over a lifetime will earn 50 percent more than high school graduates will earn. As the educational level of an individual rises, so does earning potential. Obviously, as earnings increase, so does spending. Increased spending in a community boosts its economy and tax base, thus reducing the overall burden on everyone.

Take, for example, the actual story of a high school-educated man in a small, rural Louisiana community who provided for his family with his one-man, sign-painting business. He realized the value of higher education, and he struggled to send his sons to the state university where one studied art and graphics and the other studied business and marketing.

Today, those sons and their father run a million-dollar-plus, sign-manufacturing company that does business in most of the 50 states and several foreign countries. It is one of the largest private employers in the parish and has made the sign-painter and his sons wealthy. It is a thriving testimony to the practical value of higher education.

In some aspects, though, this realization of practical value has dissipated as higher education has been forced to compete with other institutions, services, and agencies for limited public dollars. This is one consequence that administrators must concentrate on preventing if they are to avoid becoming limited, elitist institutions.

Where higher education goes from here is not too difficult to imagine as one considers a budget crunch that does not promise relief any time soon. Education must respond—either by choice or by force—to the demands of the public that it be more proficient and effective with public dollars. In Louisiana, the legislature recently established a 15-member Advisory Committee for Accountability in Public Higher Education. Their duty consists of designing an accountability plan, after which they are to report back to the legislature.

Our administrators and faculty must leave their ivy halls and heady think tanks for business offices and public hearings. Ivory towers must be replaced by telecommunications towers. The town-gown relationship must be reinforced and strengthened. Students must graduate not only with a degree, but with a practical ability to transpose that degree into a job.

Curricula must be redesigned to take into consideration the needs of the 21st century and the renewed competition it will bring, both at home and abroad. More foreign language study must be required, for example, with an emphasis on the languages of newly developing nations.

Smaller liberal arts colleges may have to be closed or merged with larger, more stable colleges or universities. There must be more sharing of facilities and coordination of courses among neighboring institutions, a process that is already under discussion in Louisiana.

During the great expansion of higher education immediately following World War II, when the GI bill opened campuses to people who never before dreamed of a college education, our colleges and universities sought to be all things to all people. In today's new age of

We must find ways to explain to Louisiana—and to the nation as a whole—that education is not like bridge-building.

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modest financial resources, each college and university must decide what it can do best and must abandon some fields of learning to others.

Colleges and universities also must adapt to an increasingly diverse academic population—not only more women and minorities, but also older students, part-time students, and others with specialized needs for continuing education and professional retraining.

There must be a greater emphasis on classroom teaching. Faculty must be open to a greater variety of teaching techniques and technologies, such as satellites, videos, and computers, that expand the traditional store of knowledge to a worldwide range of information.

Louisiana and other states are struggling to find more efficient, effective ways to spend public dollars in higher education while becoming more responsive to a public that demands to know why the millions of dollars invested in our colleges and universities are not enough.

We must find ways to explain to Louisiana—and to the nation as a whole —that education is not like bridge-building. If a bridge collapses and the state waits two years to repair it, it is repaired. The two-year delay doesn't matter except as an inconvenience to some people. On the other hand, when education is adversely impacted, simply restoring money doesn't repair all the damage. The students who were short changed—and, to some degree, society as a whole—are permanently affected.

H.G. Wells believed that "the future is a race between education and catastrophe." If he is correct, and I believe he is, then your appreciation of that race can indeed determine the future of our states and nation.

Number 7 in a Series

# Promise and Challenge: The New Demographics of Higher Education

William H. Gray III

VOICES of AMERICA for HIGHER EDUCATION

# Promise and Challenge: The New Demographics of Higher Education

William H. Gray III

*William H. Gray III is President of the United Negro College Fund. He has also served in the U.S. House of Representatives and chaired its Appropriations Committee. This essay is presented by the Southern Regional Education Board as part of its series, "Voices of America for Higher Education."*

"A mind is a terrible thing to waste. That has been the motto of the United Negro College Fund for many years. To those of us in higher education, that message is self-evident. But far too many of America's young men and women have to be convinced that education, especially higher education, is the real key to their long-term success, both financially and as a productive member of society.

At a time when our society demands that each of us gain more knowledge quickly, demographic changes and tough financial realities are causing tension within America's education system. Now, more than ever, all our young people must understand that they must compete aggressively to get ahead and stay ahead.

The cold, hard facts are the best way I know to convince them. According to *The Double Helix of Education and the Economy*, a recent study compiled by Columbia University, between 1979 and 1987, college graduates' inflation-adjusted income climbed by 33 percent, while the income of those with only a high school degree dropped by 11 percent. In 1979, the income of male college graduates outpaced that of high school graduates by only 13 percent. By 1987, the difference had grown to 38 percent for males, while the difference in earning ability for women college graduates climbed from 23 percent to 45 percent.

Why has this gap grown? Because today's good jobs require brains, not brawn. High-paying manufacturing jobs that called for little or no education beyond high school continue to dwindle, replaced by low-paying jobs in service industries. Meanwhile, the kinds of new professions that offer higher salaries and job security in areas like computer technology, health care, and engineering, all demand some level of higher education.

But it's not just the future of the next generation of individual Americans that is on the line—it is the future of America itself. Our ability to provide quality higher education will be the most critical factor in determining America's place as a world economic and political leader in the coming decade.

The challenges are coming from all directions. While Japan's economy has slowed, it and other countries in the Pacific Rim—including the megapower mainland China—continue to build a remarkable record of growth. Although the Maastricht Treaty has not been finalized, the European community is close to becoming a reality and is in many ways already a united market, with a

combined gross national product larger than the United States'. And despite the turmoil in Yugoslavia, countries of Eastern Europe—Poland, Hungary, Romania—continue to move toward a free market. With one of the most skilled and literate workforces in the world, it will not be long before they, too, are knocking on our door.

The way to win the economic race is to maximize all of our human resources. The United States will have to use every tool we possess to train, educate, and prepare our sons and daughters for what lies ahead. For higher education, that means calling on all of America's institutions, whether traditional universities, historically black colleges and universities, women's colleges, predominantly Hispanic universities, or schools sponsored by Jesuits, Jews, or Mormons. Whatever their history, all of these institutions are American assets today, and fundamental shifts in our society have given each an increasingly central role in educating our youth.

In many ways, demographics guide our destiny. By the end of the century, one-third of the school-age children in this nation will be members of what we now call minority groups. In the next 20 years, America will add 4.4 million African-American, Hispanic, Asian, Native-American, and Middle Eastern young people to its population. During the same period, the number of white youth will drop by 3.8 million.

So one of the biggest challenges facing education is how to prepare this melting pot for the future. Our record today is not encouraging. The failure begins in our elementary and secondary schools, especially in urban and rural areas where youngsters are concentrated in the most run-down, poorly staffed, poorly supported schools our system has to offer.

But even for those lucky ones who manage to escape the system and get their diplomas, the failure often continues in higher education where the majority of our predominantly white colleges and universities often fail to provide the support systems or create the kind of environment that fosters their success.

The influx of minority students will exacerbate a problem that already exists on far too many campuses—racial conflict. In the last few years, we have seen an alarming increase in the number of racial incidents reported on the nation's campuses. And, I dare say, far more conflict and discrimination goes unreported.

To my mind, the question for those of us in higher education is not simply how we prevent racial incidents, but how we respond to them. The leaders of our colleges and universities must have the courage to stand up for what is right and condemn what is wrong. They must provide role models for our students and actively search for creative ways to prepare those students to participate in a tolerant and progressive society.

While demographics present a very particular set of challenges to higher education, there is another reality all educational institutions must face—cost. The public is legitimately concerned about the rapid increases in tuition in the last decade.

In the public sector we are seeing a significant decline in state support for higher education. In many states, colleges and universities have had mid-year budget cuts piled on top of reductions in annual appropriations. And then, those schools face anger from legislators and voters when some of those cuts are recouped through tuition increases.

In the private education sector, we face increasing competition for a shrinking pool of students and the ever-greater struggle to generate the level of charitable support needed to maintain and improve our facilities.

Many minority students and their families may be unable to take on an even heavier loan burden.

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attract top-rank faculty, and provide adequate financial aid to an increasingly needy student body.

Meanwhile, all of us suffer from the decline in federal support for higher education. Even though appropriations for student aid have increased consistently in recent years, they never have been large enough to match the needs of the millions of poor and middle income students who are coming into our system.

Since 1989, the value of the maximum Pell Grant—the primary program for our neediest students—has declined by almost 20 percent against inflation. And in that same time, we have seen a dramatic shift in the emphasis of federal aid from grants to loans—a shift that poses a significant barrier for many minority students and their families, who may be only a short step from the financial edge and unable to take on a heavy loan burden.

United Negro College Fund colleges have done their best to maintain access for the neediest students by keeping tuition low. In fact, average tuition at UNCF colleges is less than half the average charged by private colleges nationally, and about 40 percent less than tuition at private four-year colleges in the South.

It is important that all educational institutions look for ways to keep costs low while preserving quality. At the same time, it is our responsibility to remind government and industry how critical their support is to the future of our young people.

These three issues—economics, the new demographics of higher education, and racial and cultural tension on our campuses—pose enormous challenges to anyone involved or interested in higher education. We have the knowledge to tackle these problems, but if America is to fulfill her promise, and the dreams of young men and women, we must also have the commitment to get the job done.

VOICES *of* AMERICA *for* HIGHER EDUCATION

Number 8 in a Series

# Charting Higher Education's New Realities

George W. Johnson

# Charting Higher Education's New Realities

George W. Johnson

*George Johnson is President of George Mason University and serves on the Business Higher Education Forum. This essay is presented by the Southern Regional Education Board as part of its series, "Voices of America for Higher Education."*

Over the last year, Virginia universities, the State Council of Higher Education, and legislators have been discussing the financing and restructuring of higher education. But in addressing both the poor prospects of state funding and the onset of a new era in university development, it has been easy to get the two issues—dollars and innovation—entangled. These are not two sides to an argument, but two new realities that need to be better understood.

We are constantly told that we live in a global economy, that the economy is knowledge-driven, and that, in the future, American business must look to universities for the kind of well-prepared "knowledge workers" on which a competitive future depends. This is the conventional argument for business support of higher education.

But this consideration, vital as it is, does not suggest all the significant elements of the issue. Amid the cultural diversity of a world grown intimate in the information age, we must cope with complexity that quite literally boggles the mind.

We are awash in data. We know too much. We know that most of the systems that interest us daily—politics, economics, the weather—are predictably unpredictable. If we are to do business, if we are to conduct our lives on anything like a rational basis, we have to cope with complex systems, derive knowledge from information, and distill wisdom from chaos. This is nothing less than the central mission of a university—and why our universities are the essential instruments of a competitive, knowledge-driven economy.

Despite what we see happening around us, we often think of college in 19th-century terms. In that model, drawn from a time when only 10 to 15 percent of the high school class (mostly young gentlemen) were considered worthy of a higher education, college students were moved away from the temptations of the city and acculturated within the reclusive walls of a dormitory or fraternity house.

There the students were homogenized and bonded through a combination of booze, hazing, and football. Their education was modeled on that embodiment of the industrial age—the factory. On an academic conveyor belt that moved precisely through four years, 18- to 21-year-olds sat in a classroom for fifteen 50-minute periods a week, 16 weeks a semester. They were then inspected, given the academic stamp of approval, and shipped out to become the next generation of leaders.

That model has almost nothing to do with current realities. At metropolitan universities—and the vast majority *are* metropolitan—student enrollment is remarkably diverse. At a typical institution like George Mason, graduate students comprise a third of the number. The median age of undergraduate students is 23; the mean 22. One in eight undergraduates is married and has a family. Eighty percent work; half of those who live in the dorms work off campus. They are highly mobile: three out of five attend more than one institution. And 25 percent come from families in which English is not the first language.

For these students, the factory model no longer suffices. Instruction must be custom-tailored, the way most information-age services are structured. Universities have made surprising, and largely unreported, progress here. An English department chairman, for instance, has transformed his usual course in American fiction into one that enrolls twice the previous number of students and teaches them in a more intense and productive way. Doubling the class size and adding a graduate assistant, he lectures once a week. To this he adds the resources of an electronic classroom, using interactive video, hypertext, tapes, etc.

The class is divided into small groups of about 10 each. These groups are responsible for holding discussions among themselves and for reporting the minutes of these meetings through electronic mail to a weekly class newspaper. Workshops are also conducted electronically, bolstered by regular visits from the professor and his assistant.

Electronic mail holds the class together. Contact between professor and students is no longer limited to class and office hours. This particular professor logged some 80 hours of computer time in correspondence with students; the students, conferring with the professor or their classmates, logged over 400 hours.

In such a format the professor becomes the navigator, directing each student through the course material, pointing out the special resources needed. (The library holdings are now available from any office or workstation.) The exchanges are much more intense and serious than they are in a conventional class, and often the most reticent student becomes the most voluble over e-mail. Indeed, a new intellectual community is formed, friendships are made, and diverse personalities find a common bond.

To provide the necessary guidance, the professor must have a full command of his subject and be a "full" professor in the complete sense of the term. One can quickly see how such a format lends itself to larger classes, guided by larger teams of instructors. In such a team, the full-professor role has to be filled by the generalist, not the specialist.

One sees here the same need that has emerged in health care, and is now recognized in legal studies—there is simply too much information for any one human being to master. Amid a welter of data, each professor should learn to teach exploration and mapping, cope with complexity, and reintegrate special and general interests.

In this new university model, teaching and research are seamlessly joined since professors must pursue research to chart the known and unknown seas their students must traverse. Teaching and advising again become indivisible. The contact-credit hour equation is broken. The conventional input measure of a "credit" shifts to an output measure of accomplishment. We should remember that e-mail, a technology that has been around so long it is no longer considered "hi-techy," enabled these changes. Radical change has already occurred.

A diverse student body and a new instructional network to accommodate that diversity are already part of our culture. They just have not been recognized until recently.

Instead, we have become preoccupied with productivity and cost saving. In some states, including Virginia, tuition has risen to levels that threaten to privatize public universities. Across the region, state funding for higher education, when adjusted for inflation, has not increased since 1984. Yet enrollments have risen 16 percent, and the growing number of students eligible for admission looms ominously.

Universities, especially public ones, have to assure taxpayers that they are not wasting money and are working to capacity. That is always an obligation, particularly when the economy falters. But we must acknowledge that—in ways both tangible and intangible—higher education contributes to the productivity of society as a whole.

This may be forgotten when revenues falter. To balance its state budget, Virginia has looked to university budgets for tax dollars it can divert—or replace with tuition or bond issues. As a result, in but three years, Virginia's position among the states plummeted from 22nd in tax dollars per student to 43rd. Universities have been forced to take draconian measures to survive. They have let support services deteriorate in order to preserve the classroom, and, by increasing class sizes and cutting positions, they have done what they should not: degrade the quality of coursework.

American universities, still generally considered the best in the world, need moral as well as financial support to meet the new century. They cannot live on loaves and fishes, and they need to feel their enterprise is encouraged. The story of what Virginia universities have accomplished during hard times needs to be told at least as often as "profscam" anecdotes. Our graduates' satisfaction (running well over 90 percent) ought to be remarked as often as our tuition increases, and the reasons for both should be better explained.

A diverse student body and a new instructional network to accommodate that diversity are already part of higher education's culture.

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VOICES of AMERICA for HIGHER EDUCATION

Number 9 in a Series

# The Community College's Open Door

Mary D. Thornley

VOICES of AMERICA for HIGHER EDUCATION

# The Community College's Open Door

Mary D. Thornley

*Mary Dellamura Thornley is President of Trident Technical College in Charleston, South Carolina. This essay is presented by the Southern Regional Education Board as part of its series, "Voices of America for Higher Education."*

If tonight I were to appear at your door and ask you for money to feed hungry children, would you pull out your check book and write a check? You might give me your pocket change, but you probably would not make a major investment. However, if I were to appear at your door holding a hungry child in tattered clothes, and I asked: "Will you buy Nicole a pair of shoes and a coat? Will you help buy her milk and bananas and macaroni and cheese?" Probably you would pull out your check book and say: "Yes I will help. How much does she need?"

Trying to explain the need to invest in higher education is like trying to convince you to give money to help hungry children. If I could show you all the students that education has helped, and can help, I am convinced you would quickly and generously invest in higher education.

Like most states, South Carolina is faced with a dilemma. The state's expanding prison system and the increasing cost of providing medical care, especially medicaid, are eroding South Carolina's ability to fund higher education.

At Trident Technical College, the decline in state funds is exacerbated by a dramatic growth in enrollment. Imagine a chart with two lines. One line ascending sharply and one descending, with the gap between getting wider and wider. In the past five years, Trident has seen an 80 percent increase in enrollment and a 25 percent decrease in the state formula funding. Using my analogy of the hungry child—it's as if we have an 80 percent increase in the number of Nicoles, but 25 percent less food to feed them.

Most colleges are faced with this same problem—fewer dollars to serve more people. And, yet, it is the community college that most often serves those who, without our open door, would have no hope of attending college.

Fresh on my mind is a young woman from John's Island, Claire Schauseil. Claire is the single parent of two young children. She first came to Trident through our Single Parent/ Homemakers Program. With little self-confidence and little money, she hoped to figure out a way to support her family. This May, Claire graduated with a 3.8 grade point average. She will pursue a bachelor's degree and hopes to teach college math one day.

There are Claires all over this country who, without community colleges and services such as the federally funded Single Parent/ Homemakers Program, would not be able to attend college. I can plead the case for adequately funding higher education with story after story.

Flesh-and-blood examples bring home the value of higher education.

But higher education must also change to meet the needs of a changing society, a diverse work force, and a global economy. It is the very nature of the community college to change to serve the community. At Trident, it is our mission to respond to our community. For instance, since the South Carolina Lowcountry has emphasized tourism, Trident has developed programs to train chefs and hotel and motel restaurant managers. Also, because of local demand, we developed a curriculum to train technicians to network computers.

With decreased state and federal funding and an increased demand for a higher level of complex thinking skills, we must adapt—and help our community to adapt—to compete in the 21st century.

Three major focuses are helping Trident to change: partnerships, access, and lifelong learning.

First, ***partnerships*** — partnerships in education and partnerships with business and industry. One example is Tech Prep. We have joined with local middle and high schools to prepare students for tomorrow's highly technical career fields. Through applied learning, students are able to connect the subject matter with the world of work. Physics becomes real. Communications becomes real.

We have also developed partnerships with industry. One of our highly successful partnerships is with the Robert Bosch Corporation. Through a special agreement, Trident provides full-time instruction for Bosch's award-winning apprenticeship program. Our Cigna Corporation partnership similarly combines training and equipment. When Cigna moved its General Graphics division to Charleston, Trident agreed to train new employees. The company brought specialized equipment, including a web press, to the college. Future General Graphics employees as well as Trident students have benefited from this shared technology.

The second focus is ***access***. Trident is changing to meet our community's needs by opening its doors even more widely.

I will never forget the night of May 7—Trident's graduation—when I leaned down to hug Marlon McCoy, confined in his wheelchair, and hand him his diploma. Four years earlier, Marlon had been involved in a diving accident that left him a quadriplegic. He didn't believe he could earn a college degree, but then he found Trident. Marlon is now one step closer to self-sufficiency and to reaching his dream of becoming a psychologist. Higher education must open its doors to disabled students, not just because it is the law but because a diverse student body enriches all students' educational experiences. But opening the doors for qualified students with disabilities also means being sensitive to their special needs. Special parking, proper seating, building access, note takers, computers—all of these are necessary, and they all cost money.

Another type of access depends on recruiting and retaining more minority students. By the year 2000, nearly 30 percent of South Carolina's work force will be nonwhite, compared to 16 percent in the nation. Yet, if current trends continue, minority students will have lower levels of academic achievement and higher dropout rates than their white counterparts. One way Trident promotes higher education among minorities is by hiring qualified minority faculty and staff members. Study after study shows that employee role models are essential to minority students' success.

Trident's third focus is ***life-long learning***. We are located in a community with numerous military

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installations, and the downscaling of the military has the potential to impact thousands of people. Let me tell you about one of them. Last year, when the Charleston Naval Shipyard laid off over 1,000 workers, John White became an unemployed rigger with four years' experience. He came to Trident to study welding. Even though he was hired by Figgie Manufacturing as a welder halfway through his curriculum, his new employer is adjusting his work hours so John can complete his degree. Trident has helped him cope ably with the challenge of unemployment and retraining.

The success of higher education will be judged by how well we provide educational services to our John Whites, Marlon McCoys, and Claire Schauseils. We must streamline our efforts, use successful institutions as benchmarks, and empower our faculty and staff to change everything that needs changing. In short, we must work smarter. We must also be our own best critics. Evaluating our effectiveness, and, more important, using the results, enables us to respond to students' needs.

An investment in higher education means that federal and state governments must adequately fund education. It also means that higher education must join with business, industry, and public schools. It means higher education must be accessible to a diverse group of students. And it means that higher education must continue to be an agent for change within its own walls, its communities, its states, and the nation.

I believe that if you consider not the abstract value of education, but the needs of the Claires, Marlons and Johns, you will recognize the value of higher education.

VOICES *of* AMERICA *for* HIGHER EDUCATION

Number 10 in a Series

# Listening to Higher Education's Different Voices

Pat Gray

# Listening to Higher Education's Different Voices

Pat Gray

*Pat Gray is Area Manager of External Affairs for Southwestern Bell and Vice Chair of the Arkansas State Board of Higher Education. This essay is presented by the Southern Regional Education Board as part of its series, "Voices of America for Higher Education."*

Colleges and universities want to educate students who can contribute to the expansion of our nation's global economic base and function with ease in our increasingly intercultural society. But first educators must meet the consumer and productivity needs of their local communities and state. State higher education coordinating and governing boards have an important leadership role to play in this effort.

Because they function in ever-changing gubernatorial and legislative climates, institutional leaders can often feel trapped between political agendas. Add shifting demographics and fluctuating economic conditions to the mix, and it is easy to understand why even experienced professionals have trouble making out the complete picture.

One thing is certain, however. The complete picture stretches beyond the boundaries of "my district," "my town," "my kind," "my company" and "my institution." It is relatively easy to suggest ways to enhance some part of the higher education system; it is much more difficult to view the system as a whole and make recommendations that move beyond narrow interests and parochialism.

Change is a constant and, perhaps, a defining characteristic of the education process. But the evolution of educational goals should not be fragmented. We need a coordinated approach to delivering higher education, with well-planned, multiple-measure objectives and timetables, overseen by the state's higher education department and its coordinating board. Conflicts are inevitable, but coordination and oversight make them more manageable and more likely to be resolved.

Coordinating boards across the nation face similar challenges—or, as those of us in the corporate sector now have trained ourselves to say, similar "opportunities"—as they try to manage change. Like many other states, Arkansas is confronting the need for change as funding declines and student enrollments increase. Like other states, we have debates among politicians, educators, higher education board members, and community leaders about critical issues, such as the proper place to educate traditional freshmen who enter with remedial-level college entrance test scores in math and science.

After several years of managing others and, of course, also being managed in the ever-changing telecommunications industry, I feel most comfortable with leaders who accept diverse input, who understand that change will often stimulate further

change, and who reject the idea that a single "big change" can fix everything at once.

These same perspectives should guide coordinating boards and staffs who want to build an inclusive, flexible, and effective system of higher education. Putting these principles into action is not always a comfortable process. A higher education coordinating or governing board is not the place for individuals who must have a constant level of comfort to function.

Any system must be flexible enough to seize upon unforeseen opportunities. We must all be alert and responsive to information that signals the need for additional change. *We must expect change to continue.*

To ensure that the now familiar buzz phrase "systemic change" does occur, the gathering of diverse points of view must be a part of any statewide higher education management initiative. *We must accept diversity—difference—as a possible remedy rather than as a symptom of current problems.*

Today, when one hears about diversity, it's generally associated with the idea of disability, age, gender, racial, or ethnic difference. All of these meanings are significant when we consider the constituencies who are served (or who are not well-served) by a state's institutions.

For example, both the disabled student and the non-traditional student, who is over 25 and seeking either the first degree or retraining, are quickly becoming a norm in certain urban areas. They interject an element of diversity and challenge to many four-year college and university administrators in terms of the most basic things like parking and scheduling.

In a more far-reaching sense, an appreciation of diversity includes an understanding that institutions vary by historical purpose, designation, and by the decisions their trustees make about the allocation of resources. These factors influence each institution's appropriate contribution to the state's overall needs.

Alone, no institution can prepare quality teachers cost-effectively, while at the same time producing research scientists, poultry specialists, and computer design analysts. Those of us entrusted with conserving and directing state funding should support policies reflecting our state's differing needs for certain fields of specialization and for the diversity therein.

Coordinating boards who exercise their authority in allocating funds must be prepared for the scrutiny that comes with such a role. As boards and staffs attempt to manage a state plan for higher education within a framework of increasing accountability, productivity, and cost-containment, they must listen closely to institutional leaders in order to secure a significant level of commitment to that plan. They must also listen to local communities and to college faculty and staff. Decrees, mandates, and policies do not create commitment—strong relationships do.

Any guidelines designed to promote change should be formed with the understanding that the process does not break down if slight modifications occur along the way. The most committed leaders may seek alterations in response to factors outside their own control. Plant and military base closings and new industries can all redefine an institution's presence in the community and in the region. These events also affect an institution's planning needs.

We must not be afraid to monitor, nor be afraid to allow others—parents and students as consumers, or the institutions as providers—to monitor the effectiveness of any initiatives set forth. In Arkansas, board members and staffs

hold statewide public hearings where they seek the opinions of different audiences about higher education's proper direction. This is a valuable part of the master planning process for higher education.

Though rarely simple to do, boards must be prepared to make adjustments when thorough analysis (not just sentiment or vague discontent) indicates that current policies actually interfere with the effective use of an institution's or institutions' collective resources. Inclusive, flexible higher education teams can use these opportunities to build greater public and institutional trust.

Finally, we have to ask: *What is critical?* Each state's political, educational, and business leaders must work together to determine this—with a keen ear attuned to grassroots voices. This focus on critical issues should be coordinated with every college and university within the state, including private institutions.

Bill Russell preceded one of the most critical basketball games of his life with this affirmation: "The game is already scheduled, we have to play it, we may as well win it." To paraphrase, as far as higher education is concerned, the funding feast is finished; we have to pay for it. We may as well manage the resources we have.

A higher education board is not the place for individuals who must have a constant level of comfort to function.

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Number 11 in a Series

# Successful Universities Reach Out to Students

Bill Hobby

# Successful Universities Reach Out to Students

Bill Hobby

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Higher education and a prosperous nation go hand in hand. Those of us in Texas had a graphic demonstration of that in the past decade when petroleum prices went to the basement. Our economy crashed as well and is only now recovering.

The lesson we learned was that we could no longer depend on our natural resources to fuel our economy. We needed to diversify, to hitch ourselves to high-growth industries and lessen our dependence on declining sectors.

The key to this change, which Texas is making successfully, is higher education. When we recruited cutting-edge electronic companies, like MCC and Sematech, we were asked about the strength of our universities. We won that competition. Higher education helped us develop a growing biotechnology base in San Antonio and a powerful medical research enterprise in Houston.

Texas prides itself on accessible education. Our tuition is low and, despite the sprawling vastness of our state, few people have to drive more than 50 miles to a four-year university. Accessibility helped our population keep pace with the demand for an educated workforce.

Unfortunately, that is the silver lining of a very large black cloud. Texas ranks next to last among the 10 most populous states in the degrees awarded per capita.

More disturbing, the portion of our state budget devoted to higher education has declined steadily. The share allocated to community colleges and four-year institutions declined from 19 percent in 1984-85 to 13 percent this year. In that period, the legislative appropriation per student declined from $3,800 to $3,400. Other states, notably Florida and Illinois, reported lowered expenditures during that period, but none decreased as dramatically as Texas.

Higher education competes for its share of the budget with corrections, health and human services, public schools and other areas of state government. We are not proud to report that the fastest-growing sector of our government is prisons.

Meanwhile, the years of ever-expanding budgets has ended. Our resources are finite and our taxpayers surly. Budget-scrubbing is in fashion and higher education has been scrubbed raw.

If higher education ever was an ivory tower without budget constraints, that day is gone. The number of faculty per student is 80 percent of the national average. Administrative costs at the University of Texas at Austin are 37 percent below the national average.

Budget-scrubbing is in fashion and higher education has been scrubbed raw.

The impact of shrinking revenue is dramatic—fewer classes, fewer fully qualified faculty, outdated laboratory equipment, inadequate libraries open fewer hours, and shabby, rundown buildings.

All of this comes at a time when the need is greatest. Our young people have little chance of supporting themselves adequately without a college degree. Nationally, college graduates earn twice as much as high school graduates. With fewer and fewer highly paid jobs for unskilled workers, the prospects for those with only high school degrees is bleak. And industries looking for new locations need a well-educated workforce.

Our changing economy requires career changes. Many a petroleum engineer went back to school to learn accounting when the bust came. Increasingly, community colleges and four-year universities have become retraining centers, welcoming those who want to make mid-life course corrections.

Our aging population will create a new demand for education, as senior citizens learn for the joy of it. One of my friends, a journalist all his life, recently completed a master's degree in communications—at the age of 73. The phenomenal success of Elderhostel, the short-term, university-based courses for older citizens, demonstrates how universities can adapt to the changing needs.

The universities of the past may have been content to simply sort through the admission applications they received. Today's successful universities are reaching out to the students who need them most, primarily African American and Hispanic youngsters under-represented among those who receive college degrees.

The University of Texas at Austin and Texas A&M University start working with minority youth in seventh and eighth grade through six Early Outreach Centers. These centers were created to support and complement the efforts of counselors, school administrators, and teachers in middle schools and high schools. Each center has two or three professional staff members who target schools with a high percentage of African American and Hispanic students in low and moderate income neighborhoods.

This year, the University Outreach Program is available in 79 schools and has 3,196 participants. Students get special assistance with study skills, academic enrichment, financial aid, college applica-

Increasingly, community colleges and four-year universities have become retraining centers, welcoming those who want to make mid-life course corrections.

tions and career investigation. The programs include a summer science camp, a math and science enrichment program, Advanced Placement programs and a Language Arts Critical Thinking Skills course.

Ironically, there are still some who think of higher education as elitist. But today's colleges and universities have adapted their offerings to meet today's needs. Our nation's future is tied to the success of its education system. Our nation's economy is tied to the strength of its colleges and universities. It is shortsighted to shortchange either one.

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VOICES of AMERICA for HIGHER EDUCATION

Number 12 in a Series

# Restoring Higher Education's Leadership Role

Dorothy S. Ridings

# Restoring Higher Education's Leadership Role

Dorothy S. Ridings

*Dorothy S. Ridings is President and Publisher of* The Bradenton(Florida) Herald *and a past president of the national League of Women Voters. This essay is presented by the Southern Regional Education Board as part of its series, "Voices of America for Higher Education."*

My college graduation in 1961 came at a time of high promise. We had just inaugurated a President who seemed inspirationally attuned to the yearnings and abilities of young people. We were talking excitedly about a new concept called the Peace Corps that would tap college graduates' energy and desire to serve. While our national problems were no less daunting, the country seemed vibrant with new leadership.

I was headed to North Carolina with my new journalism degree to take a job as a reporter at *The Charlotte Observer*. It wasn't long before I heard the insistent voice of then-Governor Terry Sanford, repeating the theme that "to the extent that education is basic to the achievement of our national goals, and nothing is more basic to it, education must be the foundation of progress in the South."

Sanford believed that colleges and universities were "at the head of our educational system and carrying the heaviest responsibility for its leadership."

Higher education institutions, he said, serve as "brain centers, as sources of ideas and plans for much of our life. The specialized leaders who came from these institutions became the trusted leaders in many fields, and the standard they set is determined in the largest part by the standard to which they have been challenged by those institutions."

When we support these institutions "to the best possible performance, Sanford said, "we ensure that our leadership will have the opportunity to develop to its fullest."

But that was, I hear some saying, the 1960s. There is plenty of nostalgia for those days when the nation's social conscience was jolted by the civil rights movement and by our involvement in a war that many Americans believed unjust and immoral. Our colleges and universities were centers of debate about our country's ideals and realities, and they were the talent pools for the leadership that guided our nation to greater maturity.

Today, it seems to me, there is a renewed sense of urgency about the need for that same debate. And there is desperate need for higher education's talented products to help challenge the aspirations of America and its people.

In a 1980 study, the Carnegie Commission underscored higher education's important role in giving direction to those aspirations as the source of the knowledge and the trained leadership to help solve our problems.

The report warned that higher education is "highly dependent on the national mood. It has advanced most rapidly when there has been a

There is desperate need for higher education's talented products to help challenge the aspirations of America and its people.

convergence between national aspirations and the capabilities of higher education."

"Such a period," the report concludes, "occurred in the decades after the Civil War when the land-grant movement contributed to agricultural and industrial advances. Another such period came in the 1960s, with higher education contributing to the responses to Sputnik and the civil rights movement. The vitality of higher education depends greatly on its opportunity to respond to the needs of the nation as expressed through the political process."

It may be heresy to some, but I do not see higher education as intrinsically worthwhile. Rather, I view it as a means toward empowering the individual to expand horizons, help others, and become a contributor to solving problems. Higher education takes those who are most gifted to new heights in achieving these goals, and provides the training ground for the leadership we must have in order to progress.

The truly educated person takes from the books and the minds of others the challenge to use that knowledge in the service of humankind. It is no wonder that some of my own favorite words come from Thomas à Kempis in *The Imitation of Christ*:

> *When the day of judgment comes we shall be examined about what we have done, not what we have read; whether we have lived conscientiously, not whether we have learned fine phrases.*

The Carnegie Commission's study came at the beginning of what is now seen as the "me" decade, the greed years, a time of self-gratification and callousness toward the needs of others. More than a decade later, I believe the time is now politically ripe for us to heed the words of that study. We are clamoring for leadership that will respond to the cries of today's nation (and, I would add, today's world).

As we are confronted by issues that seem so daunting—the horror of AIDS, the realization that we have become dependent on finite natural resources, the escalating drug epidemic, confusion over a national value structure, the growing hopelessness of so many who are without homes and jobs, the inconceivably high cost of medical care, still-growing poverty and hunger, world expectations of America that seem impossible to fulfill. The national mood is ripe for a new realization that higher education can help us find the answers.

Financial cutbacks in recent years have strained our higher education

system, however, and we can only wonder whether that system now has the capacity to respond.

At the same time, Terry Sanford's voice reminds me that we have no choice but to ensure that it does.

It may be heresy to some, but I do not see higher education as intrinsically worthwhile.

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